

SJR

25

HOUSE COMMITTEE REPORT

(9)

Date Referred: April ~~20~~ 1993

FURTHER REFERRALS:

4/24
Waived HES 4/22
Back to Rules

Date of Committee Action: 4-22-93
Rules

Committee considered: CSSJR 25(CRA) am

CS FOR SEN. JOINT RES. NO. 25(CRA) am IMPROVE WATER/SANITATION IN RURAL ALASKA

Urging the federal government to recognize the dire water and sanitation conditions in rural Alaska and to become a full partner with this state in improving this health-threatening situation.

RECOMMENDATIONS: [] the same title
be replaced with _____ [] a new title

[] have attached amendments(s)

do pass

[] do not pass

[] no recommendations

[] individual recommendations

[] additional refer. to the _____ Committee

ADOPTS: _____ letter of Intent

ATTACHES NEW FISCAL NOTE(S): (Dept) _____

APPROVES PREVIOUS: (Dept/Date) _____

[] fiscal impact _____

[] fiscal note(s) _____

[] zero fiscal note _____

zero fiscal note(s) DEC / 2-26-93

SIGNING DO PASS	DP	OTHER RECOMMENDATIONS	DNP	NR	AM
<i>Carl E. Moses</i> MOSES	✓				
<i>Scott King</i> CARNEY	←				
<i>W. Ulmer</i> ULMER	X				
<i>Mark Hanley</i> HANLEY	X				
<i>Teresa Barnes</i> BARNES	X				
<i>Scott Phillips</i> PHILLIPS	←				
<i>Gene Sanders</i> SANDERS	✓				
	(7)				

Carl E. Moses Moses
CHAIRMAN'S SIGNATURE

STATE OF ALASKA

WALTER J. HICKEL, GOVERNOR

DEPT. OF ENVIRONMENTAL CONSERVATION
OFFICE OF THE COMMISSIONER
410 WILLOUGHBY AVENUE, SUITE 105
JUNEAU, AK 99801-1795

Phone: (907) 465-5000
Fax: (907) 465-5070

April 21, 1993

The Honorable Cynthia Toohey
The Honorable Con Bunde
Alaska House of Representatives
State Capitol, Room 104
Juneau, AK 99801

RECEIVED
APR 21 1993

Dear Representatives Toohey and Bunde:

As co-chairs of the House Health Education and Social Services (HESS) Committee I am requesting your assistance in scheduling a hearing on SJR 25. I realize that committee action has officially been closed, however, I am appealing to you to re-open the committee process to address this resolution.

Specifically, SJR 25 asks President Clinton to direct the Environmental Protection Agency to join the State in a partnership to finance and implement a long-term strategy to improve sanitation conditions in rural Alaska. It also asks President Clinton to request seven federal agencies for the funding and resources needed to implement the State's rural sanitation strategy.

The State has initiated the partnership process with EPA and the other federal agencies. Alaska's Congressional delegation is working hard to obtain funding to match state capital appropriations. Please refer to the enclosed letter from Senator Stevens in which he proposes federal funding of \$25.0 million a year, for five years.

It is critical that this momentum be maintained if we are to succeed in raising the federal government's awareness of Alaska's rural health problems. The adoption of SJR 25 is an important element in this process, demonstrating the support needed to obtain the necessary federal commitments.

SJR 25 passed the Senate unanimously and should be a non-partisan issue. Passage of this resolution by the House will send a unified message from the State of Alaska to the Clinton Administration. It is important that this message be received while the new Administration is still formulating its priorities. If action is delayed until the 1994 Legislative Session it may be too late to make this issue a federal priority.

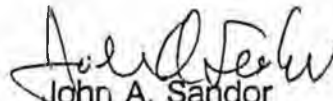
The Honorable Cynthia Toohey
The Honorable Con Bunde

-2-

April 21, 1993

I respectfully request your favorable response to my request to re-open the HESS Committee to act on SJR 25. Please advise if I may provide additional information.

Sincerely,


John A. Sandor
Commissioner

KK/das

cc: The Honorable Ramona Barnes, Speaker of the House
Walter J. Hickel, Governor
Janice Adair, Assistant Commissioner, ADEC

ROBERT J. BYRD WEST VIRGINIA CHAIRMAN

DANIEL K. INOUE HAWAII
ERNEST F. HOLLINGS SOUTH CAROLINA
J. BENNETT JOHNSTON LOUISIANA
QUENTIN N. BURDICK NORTH DAKOTA
PATRICK J. LEAHY VERMONT
JIM SASSER TENNESSEE
DENNIS D'ONOFRI ARIZONA
DALE BUMPERS ARKANSAS
FRANK R. LAUTENBERG NEW JERSEY
TOM HARKIN IOWA
BARBARA A. MIKULSKI MARYLAND
HARRY REID NEVADA
BROCK ADAMS WASHINGTON
WYCHE FOWLER JR. GEORGIA
J. ROBERT KERREY NEBRASKA

MARK O. HATFIELD OREGON
TED STEVENS ALASKA
JAKE GARN UTAH
THAD COCHRAN MISSISSIPPI
ROBERT W. KASTEN JR. WISCONSIN
ALFONSE M. D'AMATO NEW YORK
WARREN RUDMAN NEW HAMPSHIRE
ARLEN SPECTER PENNSYLVANIA
PETE V. DOMENICI NEW MEXICO
DON NICKLES OKLAHOMA
PHIL GRAMM TEXAS
CHRISTOPHER S. BOND MISSOURI
SLADE GORTON WASHINGTON

JAMES H. ENGLISH STAFF DIRECTOR
J. KEITH KENNEDY MINORITY STAFF DIRECTOR

United States Senate

COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

WASHINGTON, DC 205 10-6025

March 1, 1993

The Honorable Walter J. Hickel
Governor
State of Alaska
P.O. Box 110001
Juneau, Alaska 99811-0001

Dear Wally:

Thank you for your letter requesting funding for a rural Alaska wastewater program. I apologize for the delay in responding to you. Since receiving your letter I have seen summary documents from your multi-disciplinary task force and my staff has been briefed on the task force's conclusions.

I believe that your strategy to tackle the rural sanitation needs of our state is good and well thought out. John Sandor has done a fine job of recommending a program which tailors wastewater facilities to the needs and financial capacity of the community.


I will make the \$25 million request this year to begin the five year program that you have designed and will do my best to get the funding. I will also work with you on changes to the Clean Water Act that your staff briefed my office about.

You should also know that I have written to the Office of Technology Assessment asking for an evaluation of the range of waste and fresh water systems that can be used in our cold weather, remote villages. It is my hope that this document, when completed, will serve as a reference tool for me to help argue for appropriations and as a "catalogue" for rural community leaders that is used to select proper systems for the local needs.

I appreciate your leadership on this issue.

With best wishes,

Cordially,



TED STEVENS

RECEIVED
MAR 15 1993

GOVERNOR'S OFFICE



Alaska Environmental Lobby, Inc.

P.O. Box 22151 Juneau, Alaska 99802

Phone: 907-463-3366

Fax: 907-463-3312

SJR 25 ALASKA'S DRINKING WATER AND SANITATION NIGHTMARE

The Alaska Environmental Lobby (AEL) considers the deplorable drinking water and sanitation conditions that exist in many of our rural communities one of the most egregious environmental problems facing us today. Every effort must be made to bring rural water and sanitation services up to the same standards that urban Alaska and the rest of the nation expect and demand.

The Alaska Environmental Lobby supports Senate Joint Resolution No. 25.

However, AEL notes with dismay, that while the Legislature is quick to request help from the federal government, it is equally quick to slash state funding which would help improve the situation in the bush. The budget of the Department of Environmental Conservation has, for example, been cut so deeply that its drinking water and solid waste programs are threatened.

Alaska has the financial wherewithall to tackle its water and sanitation problems. It does not appear to have the political fortitude to do so.

It will take many years of effort to bring rural Alaska's utilities up to the standards that the rest of the nation enjoys. Both federal and state help are required. But the job must be done, and it must be started today.

3/29/93

ALASKA CENTER FOR THE ENVIRONMENT • MEMMA CHAPTER, SIERRA CLUB • ALASKA FRIENDS OF THE EARTH
ANCHORAGE AUDUBON SOCIETY • ARCTIC AUDUBON SOCIETY • CLEAN AIR COALITION • DENALI CHINESE COUNCIL
DENALI GROUP, SIERRA CLUB • JUNEAU AUDUBON SOCIETY • JUNEAU GROUP, SIERRA CLUB
NATIONAL BAY CONSERVATION SOCIETY • PENINSULA AUDUBON SOCIETY • ENIK CANOES AND KAYAKERS
ENIK GROUP, SIERRA CLUB • KODIAK AUDUBON SOCIETY • LYNN CANAL CONSERVATION • NORTHERN ALASKA ENVIRONMENTAL CENTER
PRINCE WILLIAM SOUND CONSERVATION ALLIANCE • SIERRA CONSERVATION SOCIETY • SOUTHEAST ALASKA CONSERVATION COUNCIL • TONGAN CONSERVATION SOCIETY



FISCAL NOTE

No. 1

STATE OF ALASKA
1993 LEGISLATIVE SESSION

Bill Version: SJR 25

(S) Publish Date: 2-26-93

Revision Date: _____ Dept. Affected: Environmental Conservation
 Title: Resolution urging the federal government to recognize the dire sanitation conditions in rural Alaska and to become a full partner with the State of Alaska in improving this health threatening situation. BRU: Facility Construction & Operation
 Component: Facility Construction & Operation
 Sponsor: Governor Hickel
 Requestor: Governor Hickel COMPONENT SERIAL NO. 637

Expenditures/Revenues:

(Thousands of Dollars)

OPERATING	FY94	FY95	FY96	FY97	FY98	FY99
PERSONAL SERVICES	-0-	-0-	-0-	-0-	-0-	-0-
TRAVEL						
CONTRACTUAL						
SUPPLIES						
EQUIPMENT						
LAND & STRUCTURES						
GRANTS, CLAIMS						
MISCELLANEOUS						
TOTAL OPERATING	-0-	-0-	-0-	-0-	-0-	-0-
CAPITAL	-0-	-0-	-0-	-0-	-0-	-0-
REVENUE FUND SOURCE:	-	-	-	-	-	-

FUNDING:

(Thousands of Dollars)

1002 Federal Receipts						
1003 GF Match						
1004 GF						
1005 GF/Program Receipts						
1006 GF/MHTIA						
Other						
TOTAL	-0-	-0-	-0-	-0-	-0-	-0-

POSITIONS:

FULL-TIME	-0-	-0-	-0-	-0-	-0-	-0-
PART-TIME	-0-	-0-	-0-	-0-	-0-	-0-
TEMPORARY	-0-	-0-	-0-	-0-	-0-	-0-

Estimate of current year (FY93) impact: -0-

ANALYSIS: (Attach a separate page if necessary)

Changes in CSJR25 (CRA) have no fiscal impact. This fiscal note is appropriate.

4/1/93 date J. Anthony Comte Aide (initial)

Prepared by: Keith Kelton, Director
 Division: Facility Construction and Operation
 Approved by Commissioner: [Signature]
 Agency: Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation

Phone: 465-5135
 Date: February 23, 1993
 Date: February 23, 1993

PREPARER TO PROVIDE ALL DISTRIBUTION COPIES TO GOVERNOR'S LEGISLATIVE OFFICE

For further distribution information call the Governor's Legislative Office

HOUSE COMMITTEE REPORT

(9)
Date Referred: April 29 1993

FURTHER REFERRALS:

4/24
Waived HES 4/22
Back to Rules

Date of Committee Action: 4-22-93
Rules

The ~~HEALTH EDUCATION AND SOCIAL SERVICES~~ Committee considered: CSSJR 25(CRA) am

CS FOR SEN. JOINT RES. NO. 25(CRA) am IMPROVE WATER/SANITATION IN RURAL ALASKA

Urging the federal government to recognize the dire water and sanitation conditions in rural Alaska and to become a full partner with this state in improving this health-threatening situation.

RECOMMENDATIONS: | | the same title
be replaced with _____ | | a new title

have attached amendments(s)

do pass

do not pass

no recommendations

individual recommendations

additional referral to the _____ Committee

ADOPTS: _____ letter of Intent

ATTACHES NEW FISCAL NOTE(S): _____ (Dept)

APPROVES PREVIOUS: _____ (Dept/Date)

fiscal impact _____

fiscal note(s) _____

zero fiscal note _____

zero fiscal note(s) DEC / 2-26-93

SIGNING <u>DO</u> PASS	DP	OTHER RECOMMENDATIONS	DNP	NR	AM
<i>Carol D. Moses</i> MOSES	✓				
<i>John W. King</i> CARNEY	✓				
<i>J. W. Ulmer</i> ULMER	X				
<i>Mark Hanley</i> HANLEY	X				
<i>Thomas W. Barnes</i> BARNES	X				
<i>Keith Phillips</i> PHILLIPS	✓				
<i>Jerry Sanders</i> SANDERS	✓				
	(7)				

Carol D. Moses MOSES
CHAIRMAN'S SIGNATURE

WALTER J. HICKEL
GOVERNOR



P. O. Box 110001
Juneau, Alaska 99811-0001
(907) 465-3300

STATE OF ALASKA
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR
JUNEAU

28

February 26, 1993

*The Honorable Rick Halford
President of the Senate
Alaska State Legislature
State Capitol
Juneau, AK 99801-1182*

Dear Mr. President:

Under the authority of art. III, sec. 18, of the Alaska Constitution, I am transmitting a resolution concerning the implementation of the recommendation of the Alaska Sanitation Task Force.

The Alaska Sanitation Task Force was established by the Department of Environmental Conservation to examine the critical problems of inadequate water and sanitation facilities in rural Alaska and to provide recommendations for a comprehensive strategy for improving these conditions.

The task force consisted of 27 representatives from federal, state, Native, and regional organizations. Its findings established dramatically that many villages in rural Alaska have inadequate water and sewer facilities and that the lack of facilities has resulted in critical health and safety problems in rural Alaska.

Solving these health and safety problems will not be easy. The task force has provided a road map for their solution. The solution, though, will require the coordinated efforts of state, local, and federal governments, along with Native organizations and other groups.

The Honorable Rick Halford

February 26, 1993

Page 2

This resolution requests the assistance of the President of the United States in obtaining the cooperation of the appropriate federal agencies in addressing these important problems. These federal agencies have responsibilities for assuring safe water and sanitation programs and facilities in rural Alaska.

The Department of Environmental Conservation has copies of the Alaska Sanitation Task Force report available for your review.

I urge your support and prompt action on this important resolution.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Walter J. Hickel". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, prominent "W" at the beginning.

*Walter J. Hickel
Governor*

ROBERT J. BYRD WEST VIRGINIA CHAIRMAN

DANIEL K. INOUE HAWAII
ERNEST F. HOLLINGS SOUTH CAROLINA
J. BENNETT JOHNSTON LOUISIANA
QUENTIN N. BURDICK NORTH DAKOTA
PATRICK J. LEAHY VERMONT
JIM SASSER TENNESSEE
DENNIS DICONCINI ARIZONA
DALE BUMPERS ARKANSAS
FRANK R. LAUTENBERG NEW JERSEY
TOM HARKIN IOWA
BARBARA A. MIKULSKI MARYLAND
HARRY REID NEVADA
BRUCE ADAMS WASHINGTON
WYCHE FOWLER JR. GEORGIA
J. ROBERT KERREY NEBRASKA

MARK O. MATFIELD OREGON
TED STEVENS ALASKA
JAKE GARN UTAH
THAD COCHRAN MISSISSIPPI
ROBERT W. KA. WISCONSIN
ALFONSE M. D. NEW YORK
WARREN RUDMAN HAMPSHIRE
ARLEN SPECTER PENNSYLVANIA
PETE V. DOMENICI NEW MEXICO
DON NICKLES OKLAHOMA
PHIL GRAMM TEXAS
CHRISTOPHER S. BOND MISSOURI
SLADE GORTON WASHINGTON

United States Senate

COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS
WASHINGTON, DC 20510-6025

JAMES H. ENGLISH STAFF DIRECTOR
J. KEITH KENNEDY MINORITY STAFF DIRECTOR

March 1, 1993

The Honorable Walter J. Hickel
Governor
State of Alaska
P.O. Box 110001
Juneau, Alaska 99811-0001

Dear Wally:

Thank you for your letter requesting funding for a rural Alaska wastewater program. I apologize for the delay in responding to you. Since receiving your letter I have seen summary documents from your multi-disciplinary task force and my staff has been briefed on the task force's conclusions.

I believe that your strategy to tackle the rural sanitation needs of our state is good and well thought out. John Sandor has done a fine job of recommending a program which tailors wastewater facilities to the needs and financial capacity of the community.


I will make the \$25 million request this year to begin the five year program that you have designed and will do my best to get the funding. I will also work with you on changes to the Clean Water Act that your staff briefed my office about.

You should also know that I have written to the Office of Technology Assessment asking for an evaluation of the range of waste and fresh water systems that can be used in our cold weather, remote villages. It is my hope that this document, when completed, will serve as a reference tool for me to help argue for appropriations and as a "catalogue" for rural community leaders that is used to select proper systems for the local needs.

I appreciate your leadership on this issue.

With best wishes,

Cordially,


TED STEVENS

RECEIVED
MAR 15 1993

GOVERNOR'S OFFICE

Federal programs turn focus to Southern Colonias, While the Needs of the Nation's most Northern Native Communities Go Unanswered.

No roads, remote locations, severe temperatures, and the lack of water and sewer facilities are breeding a human health and safety crisis in Alaska Native Villages. Permafrost and sub-zero temperatures further complicate the situation. 63% of these communities lack sewage facilities and flush toilets - 60% lack water plumbing. Villagers have to dump raw sewage from buckets and haul water by hand - often in sub-zero weather. The following comparison with an article reprinted here from EPA's latest Journal points out the similarities between the problems in the American Southwest Colonias and Alaska Native Villages in the nation's far north.

The federal government has committed to a billion dollar plan to address the problems in colonias. The magnitude of the problems in Alaska Native Villages warrants a similar federal commitment.

THE U.S. COLONIAS: A TARGET FOR AID

Border Shantytowns Are Separate But Unequal

by Jack Lewis

Welcome to the Weslaco colonia in Hidalgo County, Texas, 30 miles upriver from Brownsville, a city of 125,000 people, and an equal distance down the Rio Grande from McAllen, a town of 100,000. Weslaco itself has a population of 25,000 within its city limits, which currently exclude the 2,500 Hispanic Americans who live mostly without urban amenities in a fairly typical "colonia" - a Spanish term for a neighborhood or community on the outskirts of town. Seventy percent of the colonia inhabitants live without access to any utility - neither fresh water nor sewage hookups, neither gas nor electric

power - and their community (largely flat without drainage infrastructure) has unpaved roads that flood frequently, swamping outhouses, cesspools, and primitive septic tanks. Houses are self-built shelters constructed of scrap lumber and other shoddy supplies, and though tiny, they are home to large families of mostly Spanish-speaking farm workers, who face seasonal unemployment rates as high as 20 percent and unnaturally high incidences of dysentery and hepatitis A.

Texas now has laws to prevent new colonias from cropping up, but the existing ones - created by

unscrupulous land developers - are still an eyesore and a burden on the conscience of Texas and the nation. For decades these unincorporated rural slums near the Rio Grande have provided substandard housing to tens of thousands of people, most of whom are U.S. citizens whose families have been in this country for generations. Offering no paved roads, little safe drinking water, few sewer or power lines, no fire protection facilities, and only a few community services, these unplanned, unhealthy shantytowns exist today in a shadowland far removed from mainstream America. Colonias residents have always been too poor to take the initiative on the problems just listed, and the counties in which they live have also been too poor or too prejudiced to care. Nearby cities have been all too willing to wash their hands of colonias problems, saying, "They fall outside our jurisdiction." Finally, at long last, state government has intervened in a big way, and so has the federal government.

On February 25, 1992, EPA released a comprehensive plan for the cleanup of pollution along the entire U.S.-Mexico border that will involve an expenditure of well over \$1 billion over the next several years by the United States, Mexico, the border states, and private industry. The federal government's share in fiscal year 1993 will be approximately \$241 million, of which \$75 million has been earmarked for drinking water and sewage disposal improvements in the Texas and New Mexico colonias. EPA will administer \$50 million for sewage treatment improvements in these colonias, while the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Rural Development Administration devotes \$25 million to improving water supply infrastructure.

Commenting on EPA's task in the colonias, EPA Administrator William K. Reilly said, "I don't think there are higher risks to health anywhere in the United States than in these unsewered communities The health of thousands of people is at risk in the colonias due to the absence of environmental safeguards that most Americans take for granted. We intend to correct this."

Most of Alaska's 210 Native Villages lack roads, sewers, piped water, and other basic services. Water is hauled from spigots or drawn from creeks or rivers and sewage is dumped from hand held buckets into ponds, creeks, rivers or on the ground directly outside of homes.

On average, per capita income in native villages is \$8,883 and 30% of residents live below the national poverty level.

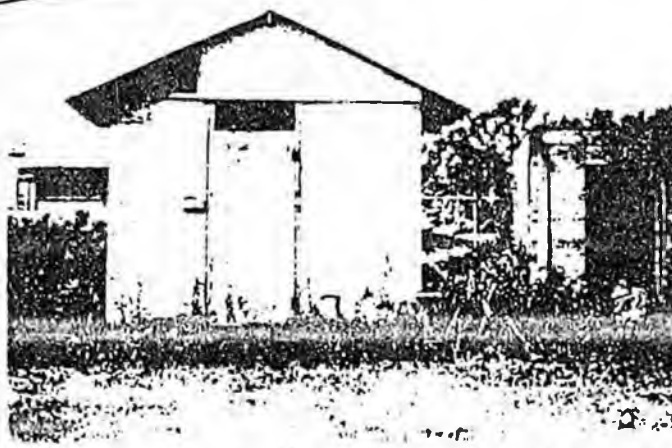
An Interagency Task Force has been formed to develop a comprehensive plan for solving the dire sanitation needs of Alaska's villages. Though the federal government has participated in developing Task Force recommendations, federal funding has not been earmarked to implement the plan.

Over the last twenty years, EPA has awarded a total of \$16 million to assist Native Villages address sewage problems. The grant program ended last year.

This is a commendable commitment. A parallel effort is warranted to solve the sanitation problems in Alaska Native Villages.

Sixty-three percent of Alaska Native villages lack flush toilets - sixty percent lack freshwater hookups. In these villages, 100% of the residents live without water hook-ups or flush toilets.

Incidences of Hepatitis A are not only unnaturally high in Alaska's 210 Native Villages, the disease is endemic. Dysentery is so commonplace it is rarely reported.



Steps at EPA



Raw sewage picked from honeybuckets, overflowing sewage bunkers, and uncovered sewage pits filled with human waste pose an immediate threat to the health of village residents. The residents of most Alaska Native Villages lead a traditional subsistence lifestyle. Subsistence activities such as cleaning of fish and gutting of game often take place in close proximity to unconfined wastes—providing a perfect catalyst for fecal/oral/foodborne disease transmission. Unlined sewage pits allow liquid wastes to leach into the groundwater in communities where shallow wells provide the community's drinking water. Children play in close proximity to wastes and can easily trip and fall into sewage pits which scatter village sites. In some villages, honeybucket wastes are picked onto the banks of the same river from which residents obtain untreated drinking water.

Not just the poorest of the poor, but the entire population of 60% of Alaska's 210 Native Villages must haul their water. 30% of these villages offer residents a single washeteria from which they may obtain water; 20 percent service residents with one to several centrally located spigots from which they haul water; and in 10% residents are forced to carry water or ice from shallow wells, streams, or creeks. Due to the lack of adequate sewerage systems, fecal coliform contamination of drinking water sources occurs frequently.

EPA has estimated the sewerage needs alone of Alaska Native Villages to exceed \$495 million (in 1989 dollars). If water supply projects were added to this estimate, it would more than double the costs.

Addressing the water and sewer needs of rural villages is a priority of the State of Alaska. Since 1989, Alaska has spent over \$130 million in this effort. Unfortunately, due to declining State revenues, it may be difficult to sustain this level of commitment.

There is no such funding plan in the works for Alaska Native Villages, rather, the third world living conditions and dire water and sewer needs of these communities continue to be ignored by Congress and federal agencies.

Federal and State agencies have estimated the cost of providing acceptable sanitation facilities to all Alaska villages to be \$1.2 - \$1.3 billion.

November of 1989, Texas voters permitted the Economically Distressed Areas Program to fund its operations by issuing \$100 million in bonds for construction, acquisition, or improvements to water supplies, and/or wastewater collection/treatment works, including all necessary engineering work but not maintenance or ongoing expenses. In 1991, Texas amplified that bond issue fund by \$150 million, creating a total pool of \$250 million for water works in the Texas colonias.

Another resource that should be mentioned here is the \$15 million EPA put into a Colonia Plumbing Loan Program back in 1990; the first applicants for these internal plumbing and house hook-up loans are now awaiting the ruling of the Texas Water Development Board, which will also manage whatever colonias millions Congress appropriates in the fall. (New Mexico's colonias effort is dwarfed by that of Texas; from 1972 to 1990, the state's Environment Department gave out only \$12 million in grants and loans for drinking water and wastewater work in the New Mexico colonias.)

Disconcertingly, some experts have estimated that extending sewage treatment to all Texas colonias residents would cost at least \$500 million, while further improvements in the drinking water supply would cost \$250 million. In other words, total resolution of the problem, in its present scale, is still beyond our grasp. Part of the rationale for tackling it gradually is that local institutions do not yet exist in most of the 913

colonias housing 215,000 Hispanic farm workers in sixteen Texas and New Mexico border counties. Until local governments form or local water utilities show more initiative to handle sewage treatment, it will be difficult to "micro-manage" large construction projects.

Significantly, Lull, Texas—the first colonia to receive construction money from the state's Economically Distressed Areas Program account—was recently annexed by an adjacent city, Edinburg, Texas. In August 1991, the Texas Water Development Board and the Edinburg City Council approved the use of a \$565,000 loan and an \$885,000 grant to finance water improvements and construction of a wastewater system for the Lull colonia. Lull is a Hispanic community in Hidalgo County with nearly 1,300 inhabitants all U.S. citizens in good standing—and a history dating back to the 1920s.

In Lull, as throughout the U.S. colonias, few current citizens now have access to sewage treatment, except in the form of archaic, overcrowded, overworked septic tanks, while roughly 80 percent have some kind of amateur fresh-water hookup, for cooking and bathing, but not necessarily for drinking and not necessarily within the home itself. The dwelling can range in quality from a handsome stucco house with several bedrooms to a broken-down hovel built from cinder blocks, tin sheets, scrap lumber, plastic, and cardboard. Most residents use outhouse privies that flood every time rains inundate the uncurbed, muddy streets and

fields of the colonias, where children and animals are frequently seen playing the same day.

Some colonias residents— all of whom own cars or trucks, and many of whom own their own land and dwellings—drive as much as 30 miles to buy bottles of fresh drinking water. The poorest of the poor, however, drink directly from outdoor taps or from the wells feeding those taps, and the ground water that comes from these sources is contaminated with fecal coliform as a result of the repeated sewage floods. Outbreaks of dysentery and hepatitis A are commonplace in the colonias, even though in the rest of the United States these severe water-borne afflictions are considered Third World diseases.

Some 16 other colonia-related water and wastewater projects are now in the Texas Water Development Board pipeline, which will grow wider and wealthier in the fall. Six applicants with completed facility plans have, like Lull, recently been awarded cash. These projects include Socorro in El Paso County (\$1.6 million); Cameron Park in Cameron County (\$6.4 million); Granjeno and Madero in Hidalgo County (\$2.89 million); areas outside Eagle Pass in Maverick County (\$11 million); Westway in El Paso County (\$100,000); Sebastian and Lasara in Willacy County (\$3 million). The Hacienda Gardens colonia in Cameron County has a completed facility plan that is now being evaluated, while five other counties are now preparing their engineering facility plans.

EPA JOURNAL

In 63% of Alaska Native Villages, the entire population is forced to use a bucket as a toilet or an outhouse as a restroom, while 60% do not have any type of fresh water hook-up into homes. Many of the insufficient number of homes built by HUD each year in these 210 villages are designed to limit homeowners to using honeybuckets (a pail placed in the home as a toilet) or outhouse privies.

- Hepatitis A is a viral infection causing nausea, vomiting, abdominal pain, and (for some patients) jaundice (or yellowing of the skin or eyes). Nearly all persons recover without any complications. Infection results in life-long immunity and unlike hepatitis B, there are no hepatitis A carriers or long-term health risks. It is most often spread from person-to-person by the fecal-oral route. There is no specific treatment.
- Hepatitis A has occurred cyclically in Alaska (and the United States) for many years. In Alaska, very large increases (epidemics) in the number of hepatitis A cases occur every 10-15 years - the most recent epidemics were in 1974-77 and 1986-89. Nearly 2,000 cases of acute hepatitis A were recorded during the 1986-89 epidemic, the *actual* number of hepatitis A cases is larger since many children with hepatitis A are not sick enough to need medical attention.
- In October 1992, hepatitis A began occurring in the Kotzebue region. As of January 26, 1993, cases have been identified in Selawik (36 cases), Buckland (5 cases), Kotzebue (1 case), and Shungnak (1 case). As is in the past, the *actual* number of cases is larger. Most of the cases are among children, there are only a few adults affected with the oldest being 32 years of age. One death, a 14-year-old boy, has occurred. This unfortunate event was not completely unexpected, deaths from hepatitis A occur at a rate of about 5 deaths per 1,000 cases.
- Immune globulin (IG) shots are used to try to stop the spread of hepatitis A. However, these shots have not been able to stop outbreaks in Alaska.
- Efforts are now underway to attempt to make a newly developed hepatitis A vaccine available to persons living in the villages affected by the current outbreak. Because vaccine licensure is pending in the United States (it is already licensed in six European countries) before vaccine can be used, special approval must be obtained from the U.S. Food and Drug Administration, as well as the vaccine manufacturer, local and regional health corporations, and a scientific and ethical review board.
- The Section of Epidemiology is working with the Alaska Area Native Health Service and the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention to coordinate a hepatitis A vaccination program. The program plan has been discussed with Paul Hansen, Health Administrator, Maniilaq Association. For additional details contact Dr. Michael Beller, Section of Epidemiology, Division of Public Health.

WALTER J. HICKEL
GOVERNOR



P. O. Box 110001
Juneau, Alaska 99811-0001
(907) 465-3500

STATE OF ALASKA
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR
JUNEAU

December 17, 1992

The Honorable Ted Stevens
United States Senate
522 Hart Building
Washington, DC 20510-0201

RECEIVED
JAN 15 1993
DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL CONSERVATION

Dear Ted,

A little over a year ago, I asked Commissioner Sandor of the Department of Environmental Conservation to put together a multi-disciplinary task force to look into ways of improving the tremendous sanitation problems experienced in our state's rural communities. He assembled a 45-member team representing over 25 state, federal, and Native organizations. Through the dedicated efforts of these experienced professionals, Alaska now has a long-term, well-defined rural sanitation strategy.

It's an ambitious but realistic strategy which has gained strong support from the Alaska Federation of Natives and the Alaska Municipal League. My Rural Development Subcabinet has also endorsed it.

I am committed to implementing this plan and would appreciate your assistance in securing a parallel federal commitment.

I realize federal resources are tight, but I believe the funding plan we are proposing is prudent. Given the willingness of Congress to limit the state's ability to develop our natural resources and thereby generate royalties and revenues to pay for solving this problem on our own, I think this funding request is more than reasonable.

Specifically, I am requesting your assistance in securing a five-year federal commitment which matches the state's allocation of \$25 million per year for improving water and sewage systems in rural Alaska. A percentage of the federal appropriations should be designated to fund the state's efforts to provide the training and support necessary to ensure the proper community planning, operation, and management of these facilities. When compared to the millions of federal dollars currently being spent for water and sewage projects in such areas as Tijuana (over \$120 million this year alone), I think everyone would agree our request is reasonable, and Alaska's sanitation needs are as great or greater.

WATER: EPA takes a look

Continued from Page B-1

EPA offers help

Bush sanitation woes addressed

By STACEY JOYCE
States News Service

WASHINGTON — EPA Administrator Carol Browner promised Thursday to help Alaska combat unsanitary water and sewage conditions that are jeopardizing the health of rural villagers.

Browner appeared before the Senate Appropriations subcommittee that has jurisdiction over the Environmental Protection Agency to discuss the agency's future environmental strategy and funding.

At the hearing, Sen. Ted Stevens, R-Alaska, asked Browner to form a federal-state alliance dedicated to improving sanitation facilities and rural Alaska's quality of life.

About 170,000 villagers in Alaska have no running water or flush toilets, Stevens told Browner. In rural areas it is customary for people to

Please see Page B-3. WATER

use honey buckets or cart waste out to a sewage lagoon. To shower or wash clothes, residents often must rely on a community water point. Such accommodations are not just primitive, but unhealthy, Stevens said.

The senator displayed poster-sized photographs of children playing near lagoons containing raw sewage and of waste floating down streams in warm weather.

Calling the photos "compelling," Browner said, "It's far too easy to forget that some people don't have basic health and hygiene facilities."

Since August, more than 150 people in Alaska have contracted hepatitis A, which can cause liver damage or — in extreme cases — death, said Keith Kelton, director of facility construction and operation for the state's Department of Environmental Conservation.

Browner told the lawmakers that EPA already has convened a joint task force to address the inadequate, and in some cases nonexistent, water and sewage facilities.

"We are working to address these very pressing concerns, and we look forward to working with you and the Alaska delegation to develop whatever it takes to solve this problem," Browner said.

Stevens also spoke of the difference a financial partnership could make.

"If state and federal government put up \$10 million for 10 years at least we could make a dent," he said.

To succeed, however, priorities are critical, Stevens said. Otherwise, money can be wasted and the program could unravel if projects are not thought out.

Jeff Silverman, spokesman for the Alaska Federation of Natives, echoed these sentiments.

"It's more than just capital outlays. More than that, success depends upon human resources," such as training people in a village to operate new sewage facilities, Silverman said in a phone interview.

"The problem is going to take five to 10 years to be resolved, but each step is very valuable," he said. "It's clear from what Carol Browner said that we're started on our way."

04-22-93 07:49 PM FROM SEN STEVENS PRESS TO PRESS LIST 2

PC1/02

Ted Stevens

United States Senator For Alaska



Contact: Press Office
(907) 224-5200

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Thursday, April 23, 1993

STEVENS URGES FEDERAL COOPERATION FOR RURAL WASTEWATER PROJECTS

Senator Stevens employed the old adage "a picture can tell a thousand words" today by showing Environmental Protection Agency Administrator Carol Browner photographs of what passes for sanitation systems in some rural Alaska communities.

The photos were part of Stevens' pitch for greater federal assistance in constructing wastewater facilities in Alaska villages. "Of 210 Alaska Native villages, 132 of them are totally without running water or flushing toilets," Stevens told Browner.

"These conditions hit Alaska Natives particularly hard. We've just had a outbreak of hepatitis-A and we know that a lack of adequate sanitation simply makes the situation worse."

Stevens explained to Browner and members of the Appropriations Subcommittee on VA, HUD, and Independent Agencies what honey buckets are and how the waste is disposed. He showed the committee pictures of the honeybuckets and sewage bunkers which have overflowed.

"I realize these are not pretty pictures," Stevens said following the hearing, "but we cannot sugar-coat the reality which many Native people face. It is my hope that by bringing this message home in this manner, we can raise the awareness level of my colleagues and Administration officials."

Stevens urged Administrator Browner to work with the Alaska Sanitation Task Force, established by the Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation (ADEC). That task force has recommended 60 specific tasks for improving sanitation conditions in rural Alaska.

"We would like the State and the Federal Government to take on a joint project to deal with this issue."

<END>

04-22-93 07:49 PM FROM SEN STEVENS PRESS

TO PRESS LIST 2

F02/02

Wastewater

4/22/93

Page 2

Stevens said the State and the Federal Government should make a long-term commitment to addressing the sanitation needs of rural Alaskans by developing a matching fund program. "If both governments set aside funds over a ten-year period on a matching basis, we might be able to make a dent in this problem and keep some of our commitments to the Native people."

Browner told Stevens, "the photographs are quite compelling. It is, I think, far too easy for us to forget that there are still people across this country who don't have a basic health and human hygiene" infrastructure.

She told Stevens that EPA has convened a task force that is working with ADEC to try to address the pressing concern and that she "looks forward to working with the Alaska Congressional Delegation to develop whatever it takes to solve this problem."

A 1990 EPA report shows that 74 percent of America's Native wastewater needs are concentrated in Alaska.

♦ ♦ ♦

Radio Stations, for audio:

Dial toll-free: 800-545-1267.

From the main menu, press 3.

To hear Senator Stevens, press 1.

During the program, there are several options for rewinding/fast forwarding through the tapes:

To replay the message, press 8

To back up five seconds, press 4

To pause or resume, press 5

To advance five seconds, press 6

To return to the main menu, press 4